

Learning to Shoot at Things that Moved

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Soup-cans, tires searing in the summer
air, coke bottles so old the red rubbed
off— these were easy to shoot at, even
while the Winchester bucked back into
my shoulder like his fist bruising my
body near to death. *Just hold your
breath*, he said, *just squeeze the trigger
until it surprises you.*

Only after we'd
sped back to the city, sun-stroked,
burned, did I think about what
else I'd learned, aiming at some
stillness that was also sentient—
lizards sunning themselves
on stones, jack-rabbits stunned
as bleached statues staring right
back at who was sighting them—
how it felt to take life away when
someone else seemed to put a gun
to your head forcing you to do it,
& you would to have to find a way
to live with the fact that he hadn't.